1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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B. Constitutional and Social

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As well as those aspects of economic and commercial life examined in Chapter V A, other elements of recent historical experience in Malta need to be considered before we can begin to understand the contemporary scene. Of these other elements, only a few can be mentioned here, some 'institutional' in character such as problems of Government, Public Health, Education, and the Church; others more individual - consisting of the factors other than institutional that govern human choice - are considered in Chapters VI and X F.

First a brief survey of constitutional developments in Malta. One main theme runs through the whole history of government in Malta, a theme which illustrates the close parallelism of social and economic developments. In so far as Malta exists mainly in terms of her locational value to non-Maltese powers, any system of government is forced to subordinate local interests to those of the metropolitan power. This can always be justified by the valid assertion that the survival of even a residual part of the former depends on the strength of the latter.

Before 1798, government was naturally conceived of in strictly feudal terms. The Order of St. John exercised immediate sovereignty, the indigenous territorial nobility maintaining a certain precarious status by courtesy of the Order. Two assemblages existed, also mainly by courtesy of the Knights, the *Consiglio Popolare* a self-nominating body of squires and clergy which appears to have had very limited nominal functions, and the *Consiglio dell Universita* the body controlling the central grain monopoly and which to some extent overlapped with the *Consiglio Popolare*. The municipalities, an over-elaborate name for the towns and villages, were headed by *giurati*, essentially village headmen, and selected nobles. All power, as distinct from position, resided in the hands of the Grand Master and his Council, this necessitated by the function of the Order.

Between 1798 and 1802 British intervention was based purely on military needs as then conceived. During and after French occupation the vacuum left by the *de facto* departure of the Order was to some extent filled by the spontaneous formation of a rather amorphous *Congresso* of local leaders. This body in 1802 declared its refusal to submit either to the return of the Order or to rule by the Kingdom of the Sicilies, but was prepared to become subject to the British Crown. Such a declaration together with claims for acknowledgment of special rights for the *Congresso* and the *Consiglio Popolare* and of the Church, could not be simply accepted in wartime conditions, but provided the basis for later development.

Until the Royal Commission of 1812 (1) made its recommendations for Direct Rule, recommendations followed by the appointment of the first Governor Sir Thomas Maitland in 1813, there was considerable confusion concerning the constitutional position. Briefly we may say that then as later the issue was complicated by three main issues. In the first place, the claims advanced by the Maltese nobility were not consistent with their lack of experience of governing. Secondly, as the 1812 Commissioners found, the old assemblies were neither representative or experienced. Thirdly, the needs of the British Crown were functionally similar to those of the Order in that paramount consideration had to be given to operational security for military and naval forces. Given a largely illiterate and inarticulate indigenous population and an extremely undeveloped feudal society in Malta the final decision was contemporarily valid.

In 1835 Gubernatorial rule was modified by the creation of an advisory 'Council of Government'. By this time certain changes had begun to take place in Malta. As noted in section A port activity and trade had flourished during the closing years of the Napoleonic War, and the new entrepreneurs sought both compensation for the later depression and acknowledgment of the existence of a small but growing *bourgeoisie* in political agitation. The Maltese nobility had continued to press their claims for recognition and power, and negotiations concerning the status of the Church *vis-a-vis* the Metropolitan Court at Palermo, the Papacy, and the Maltese Juridical System, had been held. The 1835 Constitution

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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was regarded through Maltese eyes as unsatisfactory but no real body of Maltese as opposed to sectional opinion had yet developed.

Letters-patent were issued in 1849 for the reconstitution of the Council, on more liberal lines. Of the ten ex-officio members of the administration, half were Maltese, and eight other members were to be elected on a qualified franchise limited by age, financial and literacy qualifications. This development reflected growing liberalism in England and a decline in the emphasis placed on the fortress function of the Islands. In Malta the uneasy relationship between Church and State absorbed more direct attention than did the political situation, but in the issues involved one may perceive the crystallisation of later conflicting elements. Education, an integral part of the activities of the Roman Catholic Church, could not easily be interfered with by a constitutionally Anglican Imperial Government. The natural links between the Maltese Church and Italy reinforced old literary and political connections, and, in the absence of anything other than a vernacular and rural manifestation of indigenous culture, a division between pro-English and pro-Italian groups started to appear. Judicial problems which derived from the great differences between the English legal system and the complex and unique Maltese codes, were further exacerbated by the stand taken by the Church. Press censorship, discriminatory libel laws, and privileges for the clergy were all modified only in the face of ecclesiastical opposition (2). Within six years of the promulgation of the new constitution, the reserve of Royal Power had to be used in Council to make it effective. Harrison-Smith (3) maintains that out of it all 'whether dominant or not, the Church emerged *protected* by the Government'.

During and after the Crimean War the issues involved became clearer. The revival of British strategic interest in Malta eventually resulted in, among other things, a reversion to the practice of appointing as Governor the Commander of the Imperial Forces. During Le Marchant's tenure of office (1858 to 1864) in particular, the differences of interest between the appointed and elected members of Council began to produce a permanent division of that body. The exclusion of clergy, religious and judicial officials from the Council between 1857 and 1870 is rather difficult to assess in its consequences. The Council might have become less secularily factional if ecclesiastical opinion which was then not much concerned with purely political matters had been directly represented. Such a course might on the other hand have drawn the Church into the political maelstrom; Malta has been fortunate in that the Church in the event has been able to represent itself as above politics. The main contemporary consequence was that the elected portion of the Council became almost entirely composed of professional men, mainly from Valletta and largely of Italian-Maltese sympathies. The events taking place on the Italian mainland, the immigration into Malta of a number of Italian families, affected in particular the sympathies and feelings of the two and a half thousand electors, who, by the nature of franchise limitations, were already in language and culture quite distinct from the great mass of people.

In 1864 the strength of local articulate feeling was acknowledged by Imperial instructions that 'great consideration should be shown to the opinions of Elected Members... above all, no vote of money should be pressed against the majority of the elected members except under very special circumstances...' (4). The problem however remained. Public Works expenditure was soon to rise, touched off by the Cholera Epidemic of 1865, the appointment of a Commission of Public Health in 1874, and the appearance of the Keenan Report on Education in 1880. Such expenditure very often had to be 'pressed against the majority' opinion because of suspicions felt regarding the effects of development policies. It would be quite wrong to present a picture of a consistently benevolent and far-sighted administration forcing progressive measures upon conservative and bigoted elected members; nevertheless it is nearer the truth than a reversed presentation would be. Until 1887, political and constitutional dispute too often resolved itself into trials of strength, with little regard to the merits of the issues concerned, between the Governor and the Council majority. More serious causes of trouble were the Council's claim of Parliamentary privilege for its members,

1: Bowen-Jones et al, K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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and in 1877, the first use by the Elected Members of the tactic of absenting themselves on occasion of disagreement with the Governor-as-President.

During the 1870's and 80's commercial boom, the associated rise of the *bourgeoisie*, together with the example of party politics in England, and the *Risorgimento* in Italy, all produced a headiness in Maltese political thinking and a clear division of interests. In 1883 the Governor reported that government was now being obstructed by the appearance in the Council of two groups, apart from that of the appointed members. The first, the *riformista* group was essentially a pro-English language faction, the second the *anti-riformista* was pro-Italian, that is favouring the old dominance of Italian language and culture. From this time onward political parties were born, to English eyes in strange and not easily recognisable forms. In Malta as in other countries in which such parties were sudden products of factional conflict rather than as in England slow crystallisations of attitudes, the names, the labels, such as 'Nationalist', 'Constitutionalist', 'Labour', 'Progressive', 'Workers' are misleading rather than illuminating. To English legislators, then and since, the difficulty of recognising lines of cleavage other than those with which they are by experience familiar can be very dangerous.

As noted later (p.130) the greatest part of the population was little affected through education by the many developments that were taking place. This group, the Maltese-speaking rustics and labourers, was usually illiterate. In the new liberal constitution promulgated in 1887 this element of the population further restricted by age, financial and legal qualifications was to be represented on the Council of Government by ten members themselves selected by rigorous financial and literacy qualifications. The remaining four elected members, even more rigorously selected by financial criteria, were to be chosen by special electors, viz. ecclesiastics, nobles, large landowners, senior members of the University, and members of the *Bourse*. This system of representation logically defensible at all points, was to have two tragic results of particular relevance to our present study. The first was to ensure that a great deal of power without either the privilege or steadying influence of responsibility was given to the most cosmopolitan and the least Maltese of the Islands' people. Secondly that the cleavage of interests within this largely professional class, although stemming from differing legitimate interpretations of their own ideas of Maltese welfare, soon led to rarefied and rather sterile contentiousness in which little reference was made to the facts of real life in Malta. The old dichotomy between the Maltese and the Knights became perpetuated in a division between the upper middle-class Europeanised Maltese, and the remainder. It would be permissible to suggest that the bridging of this gulf often appeared more important to Englishmen than to the Maltese themselves, although there are of course notable exceptions.

The allocation of power provided for the supremacy of the executive over what had now become a legislature, even although the appointed members were as a group in minority, but it made the wielding of such supremacy a more delicate matter than had been previously the case. No dyarchical division between imperial and local interests was made. For our purposes, however, these and other details of the 44 constitutional articles, are of less significance than the fact that Dr. Fortunato Mizzi and Count Strickland, who in 1886 together led the agitation which led to the new Constitution, were in open disagreement two years later.

Externally this was a period in which England, France, and to some extent Germany were entering on a contest for naval supremacy, and in which the short burst of conscious European desires for imperial aggrandisement produced many tensions. Increased naval and dockyard activity in Malta was paralleled by a rising tide of secular education, anglicisation and pro-Italian, pro-bourgeoisie reaction. The Maltese and Catholic Strickland, President of the Committee of Privileges of the Maltese Nobility, became Chief Secretary to the Government in 1889, and in his support of Maltese development on English rather than Italian lines, carried on the policy of the equally Maltese and Catholic Savona, one-time Director of Education.

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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By the end of the century the struggle had resolved itself into extremes. Mizzi and his followers resorted to continuous legislative obstruction as the only but rather unworthy weapon left for what they maintained was a fight for responsible government. Strickland as Chief Secretary pointed correctly to the damaging effects such tactics were having on all policies including those of education, public health, etc., but conducted an offensive/defensive battle on equally intransigeant lines. Meanwhile British, Imperial as opposed to economic, effort was at its climacteric and Malta as a fortress, whose only value was as a fortress, had to 'suffer' the consequences; a necessary qualification must be made that this really entailed only subordination in status and was accompanied by great advances in all that the mid-twentieth century would term 'welfare services'.

In 1903 Anglo-Italian relations were good and improving, the Crown and the Vatican, Governor and Archbishop all in amity, while in Malta, 180,000 people had 10,000 enfranchised electors of whom less than 4,000 ever voted. In the Legislative Council, however, tempers were at blazing point and obstruction produced deadlock. Followed Chamberlain's bombshell abrogating the constitution. With effect from 3rd June the Governor's Executive Council and the official group within the Council of Government were given majority power and complete control over policy and action. The reserve powers were re-invoked in all their strength. Malta entered the Modern Age in an unhappy political state, a state vocally resented by a few, ignored by the apathetic majority and a cause of unhappy puzzlement to Westminster.

In retrospect, to the writer at least, the most amazing feature of these developments appears to be their inevitability. Judged in isolation, it may appear facile to suggest that with the stage as set in preceding centuries, with players such natural 'typecast' products of past experience, no other play could have been produced. Judged along with the other evidence, the unity, the cohesion of all things Maltese do make it rather difficult to subscribe here to a doctrine of free-will.

Of the elements in Maltese social life most affected by institutional forces two are of very relevant interest to us, viz. public health and education. Some brief consideration is therefore given to the main developments of these sectors.

As noted in Chapter VI A the death rate in the Maltese Islands fluctuated considerably but showed a slowly accelerating decline. During the century that elapsed between the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the beginning of World War I, the main health improvements resulted from public works construction of a piped water-supply and sewerage systems in the most populated parts of the island of Malta. Developments in preventive remedial medicine and in disease control were slower mainly because of their greater dependence on trained medical staff and on public acceptance of new ideas.

At the mid-nineteenth century conditions were not very propitious for the consideration of suggestions for reducing mortality. Forecasts of impending Malthusian catastrophe were combined with diatribes on the improvidence of early marriage in many surveys by articulate Maltese of a presumed state of overpopulation. The inarticulate members of society continued to regard as normal conditions of which Sutherland (5) said: 'I have very seldom met with conditions so obviously injurious to health, and so likely to determine outbreaks of epidemic disease as those presented by many houses'. In Valletta the Knights had built a sewerage system and a piped water supply but pollution of the latter by the former was common. In the villages, the deficiency of water, refuse accumulation and the use of 'ordure rooms' were a product of ignorance and a cause of ill-health.

The Cholera epidemic of 1865 which slew 2,600 people eventually forced action upon the Government and after much general discussion a Commission of Public Health was appointed in 1874. Significantly enough, attention was focussed on the high rate of child mortality: in that same year, of over 4,000 recorded deaths, more than 2,000 were of children under five years of age. Between 1874 and the end of the century a series of reports put the blame on a series of associated factors. The ancient Three Cities and the new unrestricted

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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175 the clergy to charge for their services. Finally, he decreed that no
177 foreign power, even the Pope, might interfere in local religious
648 administration.

By these acts, the French attacked values that were at the very
175 foundation of the Maltese social structure. Moreover, the new
648 government aggravated the discontent by its failure to meet its
669 financial commitments. Less than two months later, the suppressed hostility flared into savage revolt when the authorities tried to auction off the property of the Carmelite church in Mdina. The citizens rose, massacred the town's garrison and burned their bodies. Then, led by Notary Vitale and Canon Caruana, a powerful cotton merchant who later became Bishop, they penned up the main French force under General Vaubois behind the fortifications of Valletta and the Three Cities. Two years later the French surrendered to the British force which had come to assist the Maltese.

Under British rule, Malta changed from a theocracy ruled by a
175 religious order, to a self-governing colony with an active internal
177 political life. Administrative posts gradually passed to Maltese
● 64 hands, and today the civil service, apart from a few foreign
69 experts, is completely Maltese. But in spite of a long flirtation with
[621] various forms of local and regional government, there are still no village mayors or councillors. The new civic committee in Gozo is an exception which will be discussed in the following chapter. Early in their rule, the British abolished the Università. To appease the wounded dignity of the nobles, they divided Malta into six districts under the nominal authority of Lords Lieutenant, chosen from the nobility. These officers were in charge of civil affairs, and presided over district courts. Each was assisted by syndics, deputies with magisterial powers, who lived in the villages. In 1839, this system of local government was abandoned as inefficient and costly, and district magistrates, also called syndics, were appointed from the class of advocates. Later, the government established district consultative committees to advise it on local needs and to coordinate health measures during epidemics. These committees were only partly successful, and were also abandoned. In 1896 the government finally abolished the office of syndic, and, in the interest of economy, closed the last district courts in 1913. After that, except for the Magistrate's Court in Gôzo, the administration of justice remained centralized in Valletta.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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642 more, because Imperial strategic interests limited the terms of reference of these councils, the constitutions permitted only the 648 most rudimentary form of government. Only under the 1887 Constitution did elected members outnumber official members. But this elected majority had no effective power and finally proved so awkward that in 1903 a new constitution reinstated an official majority.

64 After the First World War, there was popular agitation for a [579] more liberal form of government. In 1919, the social unrest culminated in an anti-British riot during which British troops killed four demonstrators. Later that year, Britain announced that Malta would receive a more liberal constitution. The new constitution, which eventually came into force in 1921, attempted to reconcile two conflicting principles: continued British control over her strategic island-fortress, and Maltese self-government. The complicated solution which Britain adopted was dyarchy, under which effective legislative and executive power was divided between the Governor and the representatives of the Maltese people. This created two separate governments.

The Imperial Government dealt with 'Reserved Matters', which included defence, foreign relations, immigration and coinage. The Malta Government consisted of a seventeen-member Senate and a Legislative Assembly of 32 members. The Senate was composed of representatives of the clergy, the nobility, the University, the Chamber of Commerce and the Trade Union Coun- [666] cil. The members of the Legislative Assembly and seven members of the Senate were elected by adult males, subject to certain minimal property or educational restrictions.

The 1921 Constitution was suspended in 1930 and again in 1933, and finally revoked in 1936. In spite of a new constitution in 1939, the islands remained effectively under Governor's rule until representative government was restored after the war. The 1947 Constitution again provided dyarchy, but it did not resurrect the cumbersome Senate. The new Legislative Assembly consisted of forty members elected by universal suffrage from eight electoral districts. In 1958, the government resigned following the collapse of talks with Britain over a proposal to 'integrate' Malta more closely with the United Kingdom. As the leader of the opposition refused to form a new government, the Governor suspended and then revoked the constitution.

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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659 A Papal Delegate visited Malta and concluded that the differences between the government and the Church could best be settled by means of a concordat. During most of the year following the Papal Delegate's visit, Britain tried unsuccessfully to negotiate a concordat and to get the Holy See to forbid the Maltese clergy to take part in the general elections scheduled for May 1930. The Vatican, however, declared that Strickland was not *persona grata* and that as long as he remained in power, a concordat was not possible.

In Malta, the relations between the Strickland Government and the Church went from bad to worse. In April 1930, two Constitutional Party Ministers gathered many sworn statements that Monsignor Gonzi, the Bishop of Gozo, had instructed priests to preach against the Constitutional Party and to refuse absolution to its supporters. This inquiry greatly angered the Church. On the 666 first of May, the Archbishop and the Bishop of Gozo issued a joint 659 pastoral which forbade people to vote for Strickland or those can- 648 didates who supported him. In view of the spiritual sanctions that [664] threatened people who voted for the candidates of one of the two [642] major parties, Britain had no option but to cancel the elections. It subsequently suspended the constitution, but kept the Strickland ministers on as advisers.

197 A Royal Commission went to Malta to investigate the trouble. Following its report, Britain restored the constitution and ● 64 abolished the teaching of Italian in primary schools. In June 1932 665 the Nationalists defeated Strickland and his supporters in a bit- 666 terly contested election in which 96 per cent of the electorate voted. However, their period in office was very brief. The Governor dismissed them in November 1933 for deliberately evading the constitutional provisions regarding language, for they had set about to re-establish the primacy of Italian in the educational system and the civil service. Once again the administration of the islands became the responsibility of the Governor.

186 During the fourteen years of Governor's rule which followed, 64 the deep wounds caused by the long, harsh political conflict slowly healed. The first Italian bombs of the war finally killed the language dispute. The united defence effort and the common suffering caused by the prolonged bombardment further helped to reunite political rivals and suppress parochial quarrels. Britain awarded the people of Malta and Gozo the George Cross for

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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their heroism, and after the war restored representative government. 186 64

In the first election under the new constitution, the people voted overwhelmingly for the Labour Party, then led by Dr. Paul Boffa. But in 1949 a disagreement between Dr. Boffa and his Minister of Public Works and Reconstruction, Mr. Dom Mintoff, split the party. The Nationalists, with the support of Dr. Boffa's new Workers' Party, formed the next few governments. Dom Mintoff's Malta Labour Party gradually swallowed the Workers' Party and finally defeated the Nationalists in the 1955 general election. 665 666

There was almost constant friction between the Church and the Mintoff Government during the three years it was in office. From the outset, Mintoff showed himself reluctant to submit to the authority of the Church. His refusal to pay the traditional call on the Archbishop, Monsignor Gonzi, when he took office was symbolic of this independence. Many incidents contributed to the disagreement between the two, which grew more intense as both became more outspoken in their criticism of each other. Perhaps the most serious clash occurred over the Archbishop's stand on the Government's proposal to link Malta more closely with Britain. On the eve of a referendum concerning this proposal, Monsignor Gonzi made a broadcast in which he said that he could not support the integration proposal because Mintoff had failed (whether by design or circumstance is an open question) to secure adequate guarantees from Britain to protect the position of the Roman Catholic religion. In spite of this, the electorate supported Mintoff's proposal; but relations between the Labour Party and the Archbishop remained strained. 659

Then, shortly before he resigned, Mintoff sparked off a sharp dispute with the Church by hanging in the National Museum a painting taken from St. John's Co-Cathedral. Originally, the government had sent the painting, a Caravaggio, to Italy to be restored. But the government seized it when it returned and declared that since the Co-Cathedral was government property, the painting was a national treasure that should be properly cared for and displayed to the public. In the course of the acrimonious dispute which followed, Mintoff, who had appealed the matter to the Vatican, was ordered by the Holy See to return the painting. He finally returned it on the night before he resigned. 186 659

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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665 were transformed from propaganda and social centres into instruments of government. As the village branches of the party in power, they represented government in the eyes of the people, if not the civil servants. They transmitted and explained the policy of the administration and they channelled requests to the appro- [645] priate authorities. Ministers made use of the Local Committees for business at the village level, since the Committees generally provided their only direct contact with the villages.

IV

182 The State, the Church and the political parties are thus the national organizations which affect the lives of the people at the 64 village level. The State is highly centralized, and has no political 665 representatives in the villages. In contrast to the State, the Church 795 has its official representatives in every village and hamlet. They are firmly controlled from above. The structure of the Malta Labour Party also rests firmly on its village level organization. The differing structural frameworks of these organizations have a direct bearing on this study. While competition for power at the national level between the State, on the one hand, and the Church or political parties, on the other, can often lead to bitter disputes, such conflict rarely causes division at the village level. In contrast, disputes at the national level between the political parties, or between a political party and the Church are transmitted immediately through their respective structures to the level of the village. There they bring about a conflict of interest which reflects the struggle for power at the national level.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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642 constitutional status. The British Government had felt
648 unable to accept the Nationalists' request for Dominion
668 status and the transfer of responsibility for Malta from the Colonial to the Commonwealth Relations Office; but neither Party regarded as adequate the British counter-proposal for the removal of Maltese affairs from the Colonial to the Home Office. In 1954 the British Government suggested all-party talks, to be held in London, and Mr Mintoff accepted the suggestion on assuming office in February 1955.

64 Mr Mintoff now put forward the novel proposal that
668 Malta, while retaining its local autonomy and local Parliament (with power to legislate on all matters other than defence and external affairs), should be "integrated" with the United Kingdom and be represented in the House of Commons at Westminster by not fewer than three Members elected in accordance with United Kingdom electoral laws. The British Parliament's reaction to this interesting suggestion proving generally sympathetic, the Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, announced in July 1955 that a Round Table Conference consisting of representatives of all political parties at Westminster would be convened for its consideration. The Round Table Conference of seventeen members (including Lord Attlee, Mr A. Bevan and Mr Clement Davies) under the Chairmanship of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Kilmuir, held twelve plenary sessions in London and three in Malta. Its Report was published in December 1955.[1] The Conference concluded that Maltese representation at Westminster was "practicable and reasonable" and recommended its acceptance by Her Majesty's Government and Parliament if also accepted by the people of Malta.

64 A referendum to ascertain the wishes of the Maltese was
666 held—somewhat prematurely as was thought by some—on
668 the 11th and 12th February 1956. The figures of the referendum showed:

[1] As Command 9657.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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in favour of integration	67,607
against	20,177
invalid votes	2,559
votes cast	90,343

As the names on the Electoral Register totalled 152,583 the number of those who refrained from voting was 62,240; and it was assumed that most of the abstentions were due to the misgivings of the Church, which, if not openly hostile to the plan, was certainly not articulate in its favour. Obviously, too, the implications of the proposal far transcended purely constitutional issues: the entire Maltese economy was involved, with inevitable changes in the standard of living and economic consequences for good or ill difficult to forecast. Such terms as "parity" and "equivalence" were added to the slogans of the day.

Those opposed, for one reason or another, to Integration as propounded by Mr Mintoff argued that the poll, although showing a majority *of those voting* as in favour of the proposal, had certainly not resulted in the clear, unmistakable overall majority envisaged as necessary by the Round Table Conference. Her Majesty's Government shared this view to the extent of deciding that the Maltese electors should have another opportunity to pronounce themselves on the subject. On the 28th March 1956, after a debate in the House of Commons, Sir Anthony Eden announced the Government's intention of implementing the Round Table Conference Report in a Bill to be drafted in two parts, the first to contain a new Constitution for Malta, the second to deal with Maltese representation at Westminster. But the Maltese people would be enabled once more to declare their views on Integration at a General Election, to be held in Malta before the United Kingdom Bill finally became law.

The position, then, by the middle of 1956 was that under the constitutional arrangements proposed by the Round Table Conference and accepted by Her Majesty's

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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Government the Maltese people would be represented, if they so decided in a General Election, by three Members at Westminster. They would keep their own Legislative Assembly with an enhanced measure of autonomy since a single Maltese Government would take the place of the existing Diarchy; only a reduced number of matters, mainly concerned with foreign affairs and defence, would remain the exclusive responsibility of the Parliament and Government of the United Kingdom. The Maltese Government would retain responsibility for taxation in Malta until such time as the Maltese economy was held to have reached a level comparable with that of the United Kingdom.

Meanwhile discussions between Her Majesty's Government and Mr Mintoff's Administration continued with fluctuating fortunes on the constitutional, economic and financial aspects of the Integration policy. Here the perennial difficulty remained: the conception of "economic equivalence" which Mr Mintoff had been holding out to his supporters as the indispensable accompaniment of Integration and sought to impose on Her Majesty's Government. Negotiations were heading towards a deadlock when in April 1957 a new element of difficulty was injected into the situation by the visit to Malta of the British Minister of Defence. Mr Sandys's announcement that the changes in British Defence policy and their consequential cuts in Defence expenditure would affect the Dockyard, Malta's greatest single employer of labour, created serious anxiety despite the reassurance in the Minister's statement that in any future war Malta would no longer be, as she had been in the last one, "in the very centre of the European battle area."

The anxiety was real, widespread and justified, for over 13,000 Maltese are in regular employment in the Dockyard out of a national working population of just under 83,000 and are the wage-earners for a very considerable proportion of the total population. The Dockyard has always been, in Mr Lennox-Boyd's phrase, "the industrial

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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Government and the Church had been restored. That evening, the 21st,[1] Mr Mintoff handed his resignation and that of his Cabinet to the Governor.

The dramatic events of the next three days were described to the people of Malta in the following broadcast made by Sir Robert Laycock on the 24th April:

"A constitutional crisis has arisen in Malta and I want to tell you how this situation came about and what it means.

"Last Monday evening, Mr Mintoff tendered to me his resignation. He refused to form a caretaker Government but agreed to remain in office until I had tried to find an alternative Government.

"But before Mr Mintoff came to see me, he had already told the people of Malta over the Rediffusion that he and his colleagues no longer wanted to remain responsible for public peace and order in Malta.

"Yet in spite of this statement Mr Mintoff remained Minister of Police. In other words, he remained the Minister responsible for law and order. As such he issued certain orders to the Commissioner of Police during the disturbances last night.

"If these orders had been carried out the Police would have found it very difficult to do their duty. They would have been at a grave disadvantage. Now the Commissioner of Police knows that I alone as Governor am ultimately responsible for your safety. He told me what Mr Mintoff had ordered and he said that, if these orders were carried out, his men would not have been able to do their job.

"The Commissioner of Police asked me what he should do. I had not the slightest doubt that Mr Mintoff's orders were a threat to the public safety and might bring innocent people into danger, and so I told the Commissioner of Police not to carry out those orders.

"This morning Mr Mintoff recommended to me that the Commissioner of Police, Mr Vivian de Gray, should be dismissed. To this I refused to give my approval.

"Last evening, as you know, I consulted Dr Borg Olivier and he informed me that he was not prepared to form a Government. This afternoon, I asked Mr Mintoff to see me

[1] [i.e. April 21, 1958--Analyst]

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
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again. He came with all his Ministers and we spent two hours together. He failed to convince me that he was prepared to give the proper assurances that he would maintain law and order and I therefore accepted his resignation. 64 668

"So the people of Malta are now without an elected Government, and I, the Governor, am without Ministers. I have been forced into a position where I have had to take over control of the Administration, and I want to tell you now just what this means.

"First of all the Legislative Assembly will be dissolved and there will be a General Election at the earliest possible moment.

"Secondly, the Commissioner of Police, Mr Vivian de Gray, remains in command of the Police Force. I can tell you now that everything will be done to ensure the preservation of law and order and public safety in Valetta and indeed throughout these Islands. I trust that there will be no more disturbances and that the elections will be held in complete freedom as they should be in a law-abiding community.

"Thirdly, I want to make it quite clear that the salaries of civil servants and Government employees will continue to be paid without interruption. There will be no crisis over finance or employment.

"I appeal to you, therefore, to remain calm, to maintain law and order, and to go about your day-to-day business as usual.

"Once again I want to say with all the emphasis I can that I am determined to get things back to normal without delay. I want to repeat that free elections will be held at the first possible moment.

"Finally, I want to assure you all that the British Government and people have nothing but goodwill for the people of Malta and will do everything they can to see that you have a peaceful, happy and secure future. As Her Majesty the Queen's Representative in Malta I make that statement without reservations of any kind."

The same day were issued Proclamations dissolving the Legislative Assembly and prohibiting for a fortnight the holding of public meetings and demonstrations in Valetta and Floriana. [656]